



HAPALOTIS ALBIPES, Licht.

J. G. Allen and J. H. Reakley, del et lith.

Hutton, Acad. & Wetmore, Imp.

HAPALOTIS ALBIPES, *Licht.*

White-footed Hapalotis.

Hapalotis albipes, Licht. Darst. der Saugth., tab. 29.—Gray, Ann. Nat. Hist., vol. ii. p. 308.—*Id.*, List of Mamm. in Coll. Brit. Mus., p. 115.—Gould in Proc. Zool. Soc. 1851, p. 126.

Conilurus Constructor, Ogilb. Trans. Linn. Soc., vol. xviii. p. 126.

Bar-roo, Aborigines of the Darling Downs, New South Wales.

The Rabbit Rat of the Colonists, Benn. Cat. of Australian Museum, Sydney, p. 6. no. 30.

THE native habitat of the *Hapalotis albipes* is the south-eastern portions of Australia generally; it is dispersed over all parts of New South Wales, Port Philip and South Australia, but is nowhere very abundant. The South Australian specimens and those of New South Wales assimilate very closely, while those from the Darling Downs district are rather browner in the colouring of the fur and have shorter hind feet. Although I regard this latter animal from the table lands as only a local variety, it may at some future time prove to be distinct.

Judging from my own observations I should say that the *Hapalotis albipes* is strictly nocturnal in its habits, for it sleeps during the day in the hollow limbs of prostrate trees, or such hollow branches of the large *Eucalypti* as are near the ground, in which situations it may be found curled up in a warm nest of dried leaves; more than once have I, after detecting the animal in its retreat, sawn off the hollow limb and secured it without injury. In a note with specimens from Darling Downs in New South Wales, Mr. Gilbert states that "it is generally found inhabiting hollow logs or holes in standing trees."

The following note respecting this species was sent to me by my kind friend His Excellency Sir George Grey, now Governor of New Zealand, during his Governorship of the Colony of South Australia:—

"This animal lives among the trees. The specimen I send you, a female, had three young ones attached to its teats when it was caught; the mother has no pouch, but the young attach themselves with the same or even greater tenacity than is observable in the young of the *Marsupiatæ*. While life remained in the mother they remained attached to her teats by their mouths, and grasped her body with their claws, thereby causing her to present the appearance of a Marsupial minus the pouch. On pulling the young from the teats of the dead mother, they seized hold of my glove with the mouth and held on so strongly that it was difficult to disengage them."

I had frequent opportunities of observing this animal in a state of nature during my rambles in the interior of Australia, and Mr. Gilbert was equally fortunate during his short sojourn in New South Wales. I mention this, because certain habits and nest-making propensities have been referred to this animal by Sir Thomas Mitchell, W. Ogilby, Esq., and others, which belong not to this species, but to the *Hapalotis conditor*, a fact which is fully established by the drawings, specimens and notes of that species made on the spot and communicated to me by Captain Sturt.

Fur long, close and soft; head, ears, upper surface, flanks and outer surface of the limbs grey at the base and ashy brown on the surface, interspersed with numerous fine black-tipped hairs; whiskers and a narrow line around the eye black; under surface of the body, inner surface of the limbs, hands and upper surface of the feet white; upper surface of the tail dark brown; sides and under surface white.

The figures are of the size of life.